



THE CHALICE NEWS

Unitarian Society of Menomonie
A Welcoming Unitarian Universalist Congregation

March 2024 Newsletter

SEVEN PRINCIPLES

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person
2. Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations
3. Acceptance to one another and encouragement of spiritual growth in our congregations
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part

CALENDAR

**10 AM IN OUR MEETING ROOM
(ZOOM CONNECTIONS WILL BE PROVIDED)**

March 3 – Curt McNamara will speak to us about sustainability.

March 10 – Service with Dennis Peters, “What Should a Politician Be Like?”

Politics seems to have gone off the rails, as much or more than other times in the past. And it seems to be a result of the politicians themselves. Why has it gotten so bad? What should be the personality traits of someone in politics in this country? Is it that difficult to figure out? And if not, why does it keep going off the rails? I'll try, really try, not to talk about specific individuals, but rather specific traits. USM Board meeting after the service.

March 17 – Congregational Discussion about Article II.

The UUA has proposed a change in our Unitarian principles. This will be put to a vote at the General Assembly in June. It's important that we discuss and decide on our vote.

March 24 – Service with Dennis Peters, “Hoarding: a How-To Guide”

Our country is awash in possessions that have overflowed our houses. One-quarter of the population rents storage areas just to keep the stuff that doesn't fit in their houses. Parents can't pass along precious heirlooms to their children, because the kids don't want it and don't have room for it. Luckily, I can address this topic, because I come from a long line of hoarders. Listen for a bit, and you'll come to the serious point of this!

March 31 – Special Equinox Service with Sherry and Jack Hagen.

A Celebration of the Turning of the Wheel, 10 to 11 a.m. at the Unitarian Society of Menomonie. Be ready to participate with songs and chants. Bring your thoughts of spring and what the season means to you.

There will be an Easter Dinner after the service, hosted by the Alano Club. There will also be an Easter Egg Hunt outside if the weather allows, or inside if the weather is inclement. See flyer on next page.

Sunday, March 31, 2024

THE ALANO CLUB OF MENOMONIE SPRING GATHERING

Come celebrate the coming of Spring at the Alano Club of Menomonie. The Unitarian Society will be holding service for the Spring Equinox followed by an Egg Hunt. The Club will also be hosting an Easter lunch.

10:00am — Spring Equinox Service
11:30am — Spring Egg Hunt
12:00pm — Easter Dinner

LOCATION: 105 21st St NE, Menomonie, WI 54751

DAVE WILLIAMS, Notes from a “Heretic on the Hill”



My inbox was recently pinged by a message entitled “Heretic on the Hill,” sent by Scott MacConomy, the Director of Policy and Government Affairs for the Secular Coalition for America. The Secular Coalition’s subtitle is “Protecting the equal rights of nonreligious Americans.” My essay this month will be sharing a somewhat edited version of MacConomy’s message, which arrived just before President’s Day. He wrote:

“Monday is the Presidents Day holiday when we observe the birthday of George Washington next Thursday and of Abraham Lincoln last Monday. Like many of the

Founders, Washington’s real views on religion are difficult to determine because he wrote very little about them. He encouraged people to go to church but sometimes failed to do so himself for weeks. He was a church official but often left before communion. Jefferson wrote that ‘. . . [I]t was observed that he had never, on any occasion, said a word to the public which showed a belief in the Christian religion.’

Washington did write about choosing workmen for Mount Vernon in 1784, suggesting they could be ‘Mahometans, Jews, or Christians of any Sect, or they may be Atheists’ — as long as they were good workers. And he clearly opposed the idea of a state religion which he grew up under as a Virginia resident under British rule.

Lincoln really sounded like an atheist early in life but later, through political expediency or because of a real conversion, sounded a lot like a Christian. More than one person who knew him in his twenties said that Lincoln could shock people by saying that the Bible was just an ordinary book, or that Jesus was an illegitimate child. There is a story that he wrote an essay about his true beliefs but a friend burned it out of concern for his budding political career. In 1843 Lincoln wrote, ‘It was everywhere contended that no Christian ought to vote for me because I belonged to no Church and was suspected of being a Deist.’ So happy birthday to George and Abe, whatever you did or didn’t believe in.

A little more history, although this time I’m going somewhere with it: There has been a House and Senate Chaplain since 1789 and they open each day with a prayer. Which seems odd for a government founded on separation of church and state. Shocker; the chaplains have always been Christian, although there have been many guest chaplains of different religions. James Madison opposed the idea because it violated the First Amendment and because the practice discriminated against religions such as the Quakers and Catholics whom he said ‘could scarcely be elected to office.’

The guest chaplain on January 30 was Pastor Jack Hibbs, who has been described as a Christian Nationalist involved in the January 6th insurrection, with a long history of hatred toward Jews, Muslims, LGBTQ+ individuals and anyone inconsistent with his ‘biblical worldview.’ He was described that way in a letter from 26 House members to Speaker Mike Johnson and the House Chaplain who both made Hibbs’ appearance possible. Congressman Jared Huffman (D-CA) took the lead on the letter.

Here’s one good paragraph: ‘These facts suggest a breathtaking lack of consideration for the religious diversity of our Congress and pluralistic nation. It appears that Speaker Johnson — with the tacit approval of the House Chaplain — decided to flout the Chaplaincy guidelines and use the platform of the Guest Chaplain to lend the imprimatur of Congress to an ill-qualified hate preacher who shares the Speaker’s Christian Nationalist agenda and his antipathy toward church-state separation.’

I doubt there will be a reply from Johnson but if there is I’ll let you know here. We will keep after Johnson’s support for church services at the Capitol, Christian nationalist chaplains, and the completely unnecessary and inappropriate tradition of Congressional chaplains. Traditions die hard but it can happen. The Congressional Prayer Breakfast is a shell of what it once was.”

Program Committee Meeting

Our next Program Committee Meeting is March 21 at 9 a.m. at Golden Leaf Café. All are welcome. Discussion and decisions will center around our summer get-togethers.

Candidate Forum on March 7

There is a spring election on April 2 for various local organizations such as the Menomonie School Board and city council, as well as the presidential primary.

There will be a local candidate forum at the Dunn County Historical Society Rassbach Museum on March 7 from 6 to 7:30 pm, hosted by the League of Women Voters and others.

USM Needleworkers

Every Wednesday at 1 p.m. at Golden Leaf Café USM needleworkers meet to chat and relax with their fiber projects. They can teach you how to knit, crochet or tat. All are welcome.

Coming Up . . .

On April 7 we will meet at a Buddhist retreat center hosted by Yeshe (John Samuelson). Yeshe is a Buddhist monk. Watch for a signup for carpooling.

The Unitarian Society Seeks Your Support

Our annual meeting of the Unitarian Society of Menomonie is coming on May 5, 2024. At that meeting, among other activities, we'll adopt a budget for the 2024-25 church year. To do that, we seek the financial support of our members and friends through the pledge form attached to the end of this March newsletter.

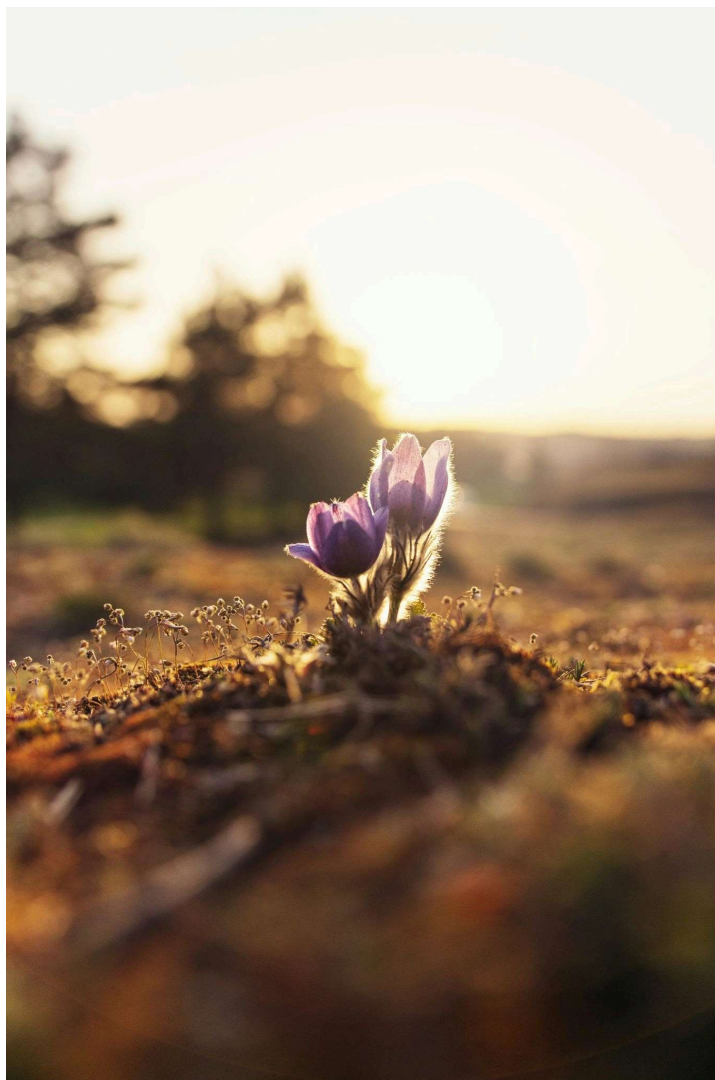
Please take a few moments to consider what level of financial support you can pledge for the next year, and what other ways you can support our fellowship with your time and energy.

The Unitarian Society Seeks Your Support, Cont.

You may print off the pledge form and hand it to Dave Williams at any service in March, or mail it by March 31 to our post office box:

Unitarian Society of Menomonie, PO Box 214, Menomonie, WI 54751.

Thank you for your help to sustain our Unitarian Society of Menomonie.



Have content for the next newsletter?

Please email events, news, poems, and stories by the 25th of the month to be included in the next newsletter to Kyser.Cassandra@gmail.com.

Unitarian Society Of Menomonie
2024-25 Time And Talent Pledge Form

“All members are expected to make a contribution of record in the form of financial, service or other donation, on a yearly basis.” – USM Bylaws

FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

I understand that financial commitment is essential to the life of our Unitarian Society of Menomonie, and I pledge \$ _____ to the USM for the fiscal year July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025

NAME _____ DATE _____

TIME AND SERVICE COMMITMENTS

In addition to my financial commitment, I will also do the following (check all that apply):

___ Serve as a member at large on the USM board

___ Serve as an officer on the USM board for a 2 year term

___ President ___ Vice President ___ Other Office (which?) _____

___ Assist in the following areas:

___ Create an annual budget.

___ Serve on the Program Committee

___ Serve as Membership Coordinator

___ Provide child care if needed

___ Facilitate a service.

___ Participate in Affinity Groups (quilting, needlework) _____

___ Provide articles and items of interest for the newsletter

___ Take photos of events for newsletter and website

___ Help with management of the USM website

___ Assist with social action activities (which?) _____

___ Serve as a liaison to the Alano Club

___ Host a summer program (which?) _____

___ Assist with set-up and take-down for Sunday meetings

___ Lead a book discussion or other program (which?) _____

___ Assist or lead a special event program

___ Help with Adopt-A-Highway cleanup (twice yearly)

___ Organize the annual family Holiday Gift program

___ Provide coffee (regular and decaf) for meeting coffee hours

___ Backup the Secretary if absent

___ Serve as a Greeter

Please return this form to Dave Williams at any service in March, or mail it by March 31 to: Unitarian Society of Menomonie, PO Box 214, Menomonie, WI 54751. Thank you for your help to sustain our Unitarian Society of Menomonie.